

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T STATE 141852

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REPEATED FOR YOUR INFORMATION IS STATE 141852:

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TAGS: MASS, PK

SUBJECT: MILITARY ARMS FOR PAKISTAN

REF: ISLAMABAD 4120, 5084

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM ATHERTON

1. I VERY MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR MESSAGES DISCUSSING IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR NEW ARMS POLICY TOWARD PAKISTAN AND CONVEYING YOUR REQUEST THAT WE LOOK AGAIN AT THE PAF INTEREST IN A VISIT TO THE LTV FACILITIES IN DALLAS. YOUR PERSONAL ATTENTION TO THESE QUESTIONS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT AS WE MOVE THROUGH THE INITIAL STAGES OF OUR REVISED ARMS RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH ASIA.

2. WE HAVE TAKEN ANOTHER HARD LOOK AT THE QUESTION OF A LTV PLANT VISIT IN LIGHT OF YOUR MESSAGE. I DISCUSSED THE ISSUE, ALONG WITH YOUR VIEWS, WITH JOE SISCO, AND WHERE WE BOTH COME OUT IS THAT A PLANT VISIT CONTINUES TO BE PREMATURE AT THIS TIME. WE APPRECIATE THE PROBLEMS THIS PRE-

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SENTS FOR AMERICAN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS AS WELL AS THE

PERSONAL DILEMMA CREATED FOR THE PAF CHIEF OF STAFF. NONE-THELESS, WE REMAIN CONCERNED THAT APPROVAL OF A VISIT WOULD BE INTERPRETED BY THE GOP AS A POSITIVE SIGNAL THAT WE WILL EVENTUALLY APPROVE THE SALE OF THE A-7. THIS IS A QUESTION WE BELIEVE SHOULD NOT BE ADDRESSED UNTIL WE HAVE MOVED CONSIDERABLY FARTHER ALONG IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR NEW POLICY. FURTHERMORE, AFTER ALL THE HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION THAT HAS BEEN DEVOTED TO THIS QUESTION, THE POSSIBILITY OF A "ROUTINE" VISIT NO LONGER EXISTS. A REVERSAL OF OUR PREVIOUS POSITION WOULD, AS YOU HAVE IMPLIED, BE TAKEN AS AN ENCOURAGING SIGN. WE DO NOT WANT AT THIS TIME TO GIVE SUCH AN IMPRESSION.

3. WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED OVER THE RISK OF PUBLICITY--AS A RESULT OF INDIAN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON. PUBLICITY WOULD RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CREDIBILITY OF OUR PREVIOUS STATEMENTS REGARDING THE WAYS WE INTEND TO IMPLEMENT OUR NEW ARMS POLICY, AND THE CLARIFICATIONS WE WOULD NEED TO MAKE COULD MORE THAN OFFSET THE GOODWILL WE WOULD GARNER IN PAKISTAN FOR PERMITTING THE PLANT VISIT TO GO FORWARD.

4. FINALLY, THE A-7 IS A PARTICULARLY PROVOCATIVE AIRPLANE IN THE SOUTH ASIAN CONTEXT. ITS RANGE (WHICH WOULD CARRY IT TO NEW DELHI), ITS BOMB LOAD CAPACITY AND GENERAL VERSATILITY MAKE IT SUPERIOR IN MOST RESPECTS TO ANY AIRCRAFT NOW IN SOUTH ASIA. THE INDIANS HAVE LONG BEEN CONSIDERING PURCHASE OF A COMPARABLE AIRCRAFT SUCH AS THE SOVIET MIG-23, OR THE JAGUAR, BUT THERE HAS BEEN AN INTERNAL DEBATE WITHIN THE GOI WHETHER THE EXPENSE IS JUSTIFIED GIVEN THE AIR SUPERIORITY INDIA NOW ENJOYS. ANY INDICATION THAT WE WERE CONTEMPLATING THE SALE OF THE A-7 TO PAKISTAN COULD WELL IMPEL THE GOI TO BUY A SIMILAR CAPABILITY. THEY MAY DO SO IN ANY EVENT, BUT WE SHOULD NOT AFFORD THEM THE LUXURY OF JUSTIFYING THE ACQUISITION OF A MORE SOPHISTICATED AIRCRAFT IN TERMS OF A U.S.-STIMULATED ARMS RACE.

5. REGARDING THE GOP'S REQUESTS FOR P AND A DATA, I UNDERSTAND THAT INFORMALLY MUCH OF THE SPADE WORK HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE IN DOD ON AVAILABILITIES, AND OF COURSE WE HAVE

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AUTHORIZED REPLIES ON MANY ROUTINE ITEMS. WE FEEL OBLIGED, HOWEVER, TO UNDERTAKE A HIGH LEVEL REVIEW HERE AND IN DOD OF REQUESTS FOR P AND A DATA ON POTENTIALLY CONTROVERSIAL EQUIPMENT. THIS IS A PRACTICE THAT IS FOLLOWED BROADLY WITH MOST COUNTRIES WHEN SENSITIVE EQUIPMENT IS INVOLVED, AND IT IS NOT PECULIARLY DISCRIMINATORY AGAINST PAKISTAN.

6. IN REVIEWING GOP REQUESTS, WE WILL CONSIDER THE SORT

OF SIGNALS WE MIGHT GIVE THE GOP BY PROVIDING DATA ON CATEGORIES OF EQUIPMENT WHICH WE CLEARLY WOULD NOT SELL AT THIS TIME. FOR PURPOSES OF PLANNING ITS GENERAL PROCUREMENT POLICY, THE PAKISTANI MILITARY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE ABLE INFORMALLY TO PICK UP SUFFICIENT INFORMATION AS TO APPROXIMATE COSTS AND LEAD TIMES ON EQUIPMENT WHICH IS NOT NOW AVAILABLE FROM THE U.S. THEREFORE, I THINK THAT OFFICIAL P AND A DATA ON ITEMS WE WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO SELL AT THIS TIME WOULD BE UNNECESSARY. SHOULD WE PROVIDE IT, WE RUN A NEEDLESS RISK OF STIMULATING LEGITIMATE CRITICISM AS TO OUR PURPOSES IN DOING SO.

7. WE ARE WELL ALONG ON OUR OVERALL REVIEW OF THE P AND A REQUESTS THE EMBASSY HAS FORWARDED TO DATE AND WE HOPE TO HAVE DECISIONS FOR YOU SHORTLY. KISSINGER KISSINGER

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